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## Review [Review of: (2014) Saggio di lessicografia filosofica araba]

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are a case in point. Consequently, this book contributes to—but does not end—the ongoing search for a satisfactory way of classifying the military orders brethren en bloc.

This work's substantive chapters cover the life and vocations of the Iberian orders, discussing the scattered sources that bear upon this work's second major theme, spirituality and religious identity. Chapter 1 reviews the origins of the Iberian military orders, covering the ongoing questions and debates surrounding their foundation. These include the level of influence that should be apportioned to the Cistercian order in the development of Iberian monasticism and the general skepticism surrounding Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada's account of the foundation of the Calatravan order. Chapter 2 turns to the orders' interior life, covering themes of internal structure, forms of membership (e.g., as brother-knights, brother-sergeants, etc.), recruitment, daily life, and the development of the orders' headquarters. The strongest parts of this chapter are those which discuss the available evidence concerning the specific monastic vows taken by brethren within these orders. Discussion on some of the problems and disputes these vows provoked reveals the extent of the author's research and draws together a great deal of evidence. Both in this chapter and throughout, the differences—whether those of vocation, religious observance, or daily life—distinguishing the Iberian orders from one another are also well identified.

Chapter 3 turns to material concerned with themes of identity and spirituality, drawn from documents dealing with these orders' various vocations, whether this was caring for the sick, ransoming captives, fighting, or some other activity. Again, the discussion demonstrates a real breadth of research and engages particularly closely with papal bulls and donations from secular magnates. The argument is made that there was a discernible decline in these orders' religious character during the course of the late thirteenth/early fourteenth century, as they passed increasingly under the authority of secular rulers. The final chapter discusses the relationships between these orders, focusing especially on the documents dealing with the resolution of disputes (*Hermandades*) that were produced during this period.

Overall, this book has a number of strengths. It offers a new perspective on the major historiographical question of how military orders brethren should be classified by focusing upon a group of military orders who—while they are encompassed by the debate—have not previously been a major source of inquiry. It also opens up discussion on Iberian military orders for an anglophone audience. Perhaps a broad overview of these orders' political history would have been an asset given that the basic milestones of their development are not well known; still, there is much here to praise.

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MAURO ZONTA, *Saggio di lessicografia filosofica araba*. (Philosophica 7.) Brescia: Paideia, 2014. Pp. 330. €34. ISBN: 978-88-394-865-5.  
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Zonta's *Saggio* presents thirty-seven terms in (Italian) alphabetical order (from accident to species, including, e.g., existence, essence, form, genus, intellect, matter, movement, nature, necessity; Zonta introduces them without explaining his selection, but the starting point is ancient Greek). Thanks to the index of terms at the end of the book, the terms can be easily examined starting from all the languages used in the analysis: Latin, Greek, classical Arabic, Syriac, Persian (ancient Parthian, middle Persian, Pahlavi), and then many other languages that are rarely if ever used in a comparison with philosophical Arabic: more than ten languages, including Sanskrit, Armenian, and ancient Chinese (philosophical Hebrew is excluded from the investigation for both geographical and chronological reasons). In addition to the lexical study itself, the *Saggio* includes a sober historical introduction

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about the *status quaestionis* of the already investigated relationships between Arabic philosophical terminology and “the languages of culture” of the Near and Middle East (13–20), and a short final chapter about Arabic medieval philosophical terminology (289–97), as well as the bibliography of the sources, both primary and secondary, and the indexes: of the terms, the quoted passages, the codices and manuscripts, and people.

Arising with the translations from Greek into Arabic of the great scientific and philosophical works of antiquity, Arabic philosophy was immediately and necessarily interested in the philosophical lexicon: in its formation, in the difficulties of translation, in the ever-unbridgeable distance between the original term and the many nuances that every translation inevitably adds to (or subtracts from) it. With his *Saggio* Zonta thus reconnects to a long tradition: he refers to al-Kindī (d. c. 865) and al-Fārābī (d. 950), who were among the first to write about philosophical Arabic lexicography, as well as to the seminal works of more recent authors. Even the choice of including—in the lexicographical analysis of philosophical Arabic—Latin, Syriac, and Persian is traditional (Zonta refers to the works of, among others, Afnan, Alon, Arnzen, Brock, Endress, Gutas, Yarshater). Nonetheless, here one finds a plus: languages apparently distant from both Arabic culture and the Mediterranean area are incorporated in the analysis: for example, Sanskrit and Turkish, but also Mongolian and Chinese. So this erudite essay is a useful tool, not only for those who study Arabic philosophy, but also for anyone interested in one of the many languages covered by the examination that Zonta presents as comparative.

With this essay, Zonta aims at two goals: “documenting in detail” the “well-known” thesis that the relationship between Arabic and Greek philosophy is due to the mediation of Syriac religio-philosophical literature (*premessa*, 9) and “showing how, according to all the evidence, another, hitherto neglected, thesis should be added to this one: the influence that the cultures of pre-Islamic Persia, Central Asia and even India may have had on Arabic medieval philosophical terminology” (*ibid.*).

These two theories or, more correctly, working hypotheses, are developed in the concluding remarks of the *Saggio*: Arabic philosophical terminology is not the result of a mere linguistic transmission of Greek philosophical terminology (289–90); the influence of early medieval Syriac is indubitable and “much greater and more widespread than that exerted by Greek” (290–91); one has to conceive an influence that would involve “the meanings, if not the forms of the words” with regard to Iranian languages and those related to Indian culture (291–92). Finally, an exchange of loans in the context of philosophical terminology is possible between the different languages of the Near, Middle, and Far East as well (292–97); in this respect, the religions and cultures with which Islamic civilization came into contact—Buddhism, and especially Zoroastrianism, Manichaeism, and Christianity—would have played a key role. Although the terms examined are primarily philosophical, Zonta’s comparison does include religious texts. The fundamental hypothesis of the work is indeed the idea that the Arabic philosophical lexicon was influenced by the cultures and religions with which Islam came into contact. In addition to the *Logic* of Ibn al-Muqaffa’, the *Definitions* of Ibn Bahrīz, the *Epistle on the Definitions and Descriptions of Things* ascribed to al-Kindī, and *On the Terms Employed in Logic* and the *Book of the Letters* by al-Fārābī, Zonta refers to texts like the Arabic *Diatesseron*, evangelical lexicons, and theological dictionaries (e.g., the *Dictionary of Manichaean Texts*). To Avicenna (d. 1037)—among whose works is an *Epistle of Definitions*—Zonta refers only cursorily (Avicenna’s writings and the philosophical lexica A.-M. Goichon derived from them do not appear in Zonta’s bibliography).

The suggestions offered by Zonta are interesting (see, e.g., *burhān*). He often includes in his analysis not only the terms linked to each other by meaning and form, but also those that can be associated only in terms of meaning. He distinguishes between terms known to derive ultimately from Greek, if not transliterated from Greek (with the mediation of

Syriac): *uṣṭuqus*, *ḡins*, *hayūlā*, *salḡasa*; terms in which Syriac mediation seems to be essential (including *nafs*, *‘illa*, *ḡism*, *kiyān*); terms derived from Syriac “in their meanings even if not in their forms” (e.g., *qisma*, *quwwa*, and *mabda*’); and terms derived from Persian (together with the well-known case of *ḡawhar*, Zonta discusses, e.g., the cases of *burhān* and *mādda*). He even assumes an influence exclusively “as regards meanings” (e.g., for *‘araḍ* and *sabab*).

Zonta provides scholars with a working tool whose usefulness—as we mentioned—exceeds the limits of philosophy written in Arabic. However, rather than resolving a problem, this essay poses a series of questions that only future research will be able to answer. It is not only that the analysis should be expanded (Zonta himself presents his *Saggio* as a first step towards a future “historico-etymological dictionary of medieval Arabic philosophical terminology,” 20). The hypothesis that correspondences or similarities between the various languages of culture under consideration should be resolved and explained only or mainly in terms of the historical influence of one language on the other, rather than in terms of similar associative processes, is perhaps the first problem that Zonta’s essay throws open for discussion, a problem that should be discussed in the knowledge that the value of philosophical terminology certainly does not finish with its etymological origin, but has its ultimate significance in its actual use in philosophical discourse.

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